# METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROVIDING AN INTEGRATED CLUSTER ALIAS ADDRESS

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In accordance with the present invention, a method is disclosed for making a cluster of processor nodes appear as a single processor node to client applications that operate in conjunction with that cluster. More particularly, the cluster is provided with a skinny stack application for selecting a processor node, to which a connection will be established, after consideration has been given to the TCP port numbers that the processor node is listening for. Further, the cluster is provided with a method for tunneling data packets between processor nodes of the cluster such that the data packets do not have to be re-transmitted across a network. Further still, the cluster is provided with a virtual subnet to which the cluster alias address is associated. The route to that subnet is advertised to the network routers by the processor nodes that are associated with the virtual subnet. Lastly, the cluster is provided with a method for substituting a processor node of the cluster in place of a processor node that has failed, for the duration of the routing failover delay. Using such a method, data packets directed to the failed processor node are prevented from being dropped during that routing failover delay.